

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 1454

By Ms. St. Fleur of Boston, petition of Marie P. St. Fleur and others that the Department of Transitional Assistance be directed to establish and administer an emergency housing assistance program for low-income families. Children and Families.

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

### PETITION OF:

Marie P. St. Fleur	Dianne Wilkerson
Byron Rushing	Barbara A. L'Italien
Gloria L. Fox	Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
James B. Leary	Elizabeth A. Malia
Benjamin Swan	William Lantigua
Karen Spilka	Alice Hanlon Peisch

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

### AN ACT TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS AND PROMOTE HOUSING STABILITY FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1     SECTION 1. Purpose. Because there is in the Commonwealth a  
2 chronic lack of housing that is affordable to low-income families  
3 with children, including families headed by working adults,  
4 because the number of families seeking state-funded emergency  
5 shelter and the cost to the Commonwealth of providing such  
6 shelter is increasing, because the number of low-income families  
7 who have no safe and affordable housing is at record levels, and  
8 because homelessness interferes with educational opportunities  
9 for children, the department of transitional assistance, in consulta-  
10 tion with the department of housing and community development  
11 shall, subject to appropriation and pursuant to section 2(D) of  
12 chapter 18 of the General Laws, establish and administer an emer-  
13 gency assistance program to provide financial assistance to eli-  
14 gible low-income families to enable them to retain their current

15 housing, so as to prevent homelessness, stabilize families, and  
16 stem the upward pressure on emergency shelter costs.

1 SECTION 2. Housing Retention. Subject to appropriation, the  
2 department of transitional assistance, in consultation with the  
3 department of housing and community development, shall estab-  
4 lish a housing retention program, pursuant to section 2(D) of  
5 chapter 18 of the General Laws, subject to the terms, conditions  
6 and eligibility rules set forth in 106 CMR 309.043 as they were in  
7 effect on March 1, 2002, for the emergency assistance rental  
8 arrearage program, so called, but subject to the following modifi-  
9 cations: a) assessment: prior to authorizing a housing retention  
10 payment to an otherwise eligible family, the department shall  
11 make an assessment of whether such payment will enable the  
12 family to retain their housing with or without additional stabiliza-  
13 tion support, b) housing stabilization: based on the results of such  
14 assessment, families will be linked to existing community based  
15 programs that provide housing stabilization supports, as needed,  
16 to improve a family's ability to retain their existing housing long-  
17 term or move into a more affordable unit.

1 SECTION 3. Effective Date. This act shall take effect immedi-  
2 ately upon its passage.